



Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

Report on the Assessment of Government Evaluations

A profile of social security beneficiaries in South Africa - Volume 3

Date Evaluation was completed: 28 June 2006

Name of assessor: Cathy Chames

Evaluation Number: 91

Date Assessment Completed: 25 January 2013

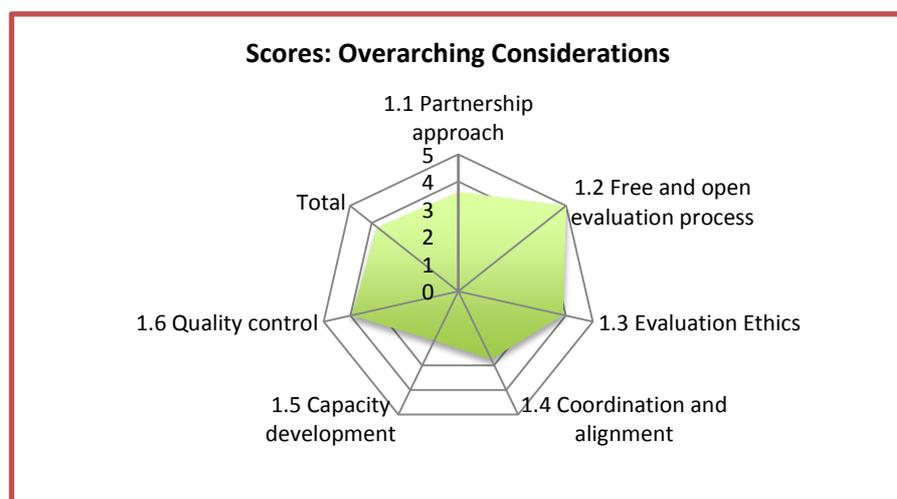
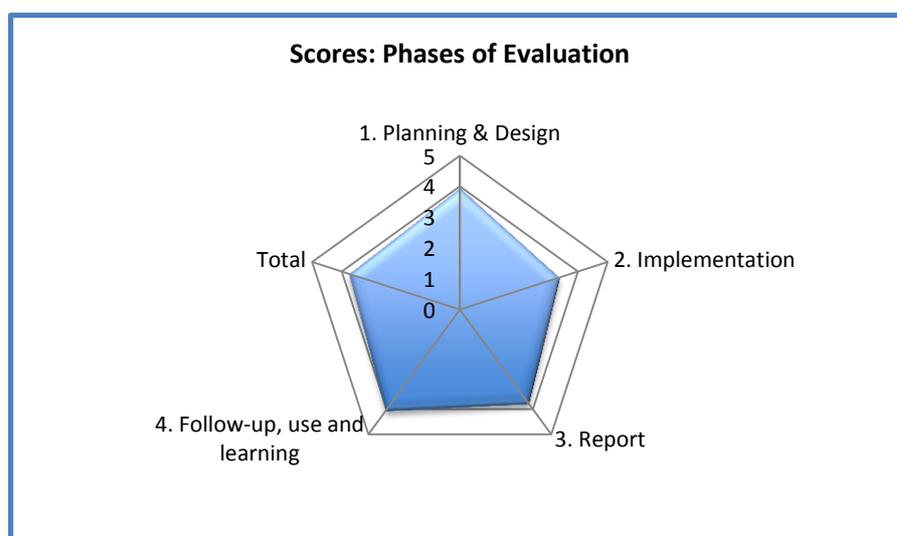
Evaluation Assessment Details

Title of evaluation report	A profile of social security beneficiaries in South Africa - Volume 3
Completion Date of Evaluation	28 June 2006
Name of Assessor	Cathy Chames
Evaluation Number	91
Completion Date of Assessment	25 January 2013
Initiated by	Department of Social Development
Evaluation undertaken by	Geospace International/HSRC Consortium
Evaluation area / sector	Social development, social security & assistance
	<i>Additional</i>
National Outcome	Outcome 3
	Outcome 12 <i>Additional</i>
Type of Evaluation	Diagnostic
	Implementation <i>Additional</i>
What is being evaluated	Programme
	<i>Additional</i>
Geographic Scope	National
Period of Evaluation	2004-2006
Known Cost of Evaluation	R17 million (fieldwork and report writing)

Quality Assessment Scores

Phase of Evaluation	Score
Planning & Design	3.95
Implementation	3.37
Report	3.76
Follow-up, use and learning	4.05
Total	3.69

Overarching Consideration	Score
Partnership approach	3.64
Free and open evaluation process	5.00
Evaluation Ethics	3.89
Coordination and alignment	2.75
Capacity Development	2.00
Quality control	3.96



1. Planning & Design

1.1. Clarity of Purpose and Scope in TOR

STANDARD: *The evaluation was guided by a TOR with at least the following sections explicit: purpose, scope and objectives; expectations regarding design and methodology; resources and time allocated; reporting requirements; expectations regarding evaluation process and products..*

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation was guided by a TOR which specifies the purpose and objectives of the task which was just to conduct the fieldwork for the study. There were no details on the exact sampling methods as this was required to be developed by the service provider. According to interviewees a compulsory tender briefing session was held for potential service providers to brief them on the task and to provide them with in depth information regarding the study.

Rating 5

STANDARD: *The purpose of the evaluation was clear and explicit in the TOR*

Comment and Analysis

The purpose and scope is clear and explicit in the TOR - to conduct a survey in order to construct a socio-economic profile of the beneficiaries and thier households. After this study was completed, DSD extended the TOR to include a study into the unintended consequences of the social security grants. A separate report has been produced on this.

Rating 5

STANDARD: *The evaluation questions were clearly stated in the TOR and appropriate to addressing the evaluation purpose*

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation questions were clearly stated in the TOR and directly related to the information required for the profile of social security beneficiaries.

Rating 5

STANDARD: The approach and type of evaluation was suited to the purpose and scope of the evaluation TOR**Comment and Analysis**

The quantitative approach using a large scale survey is appropriate given that the purpose was to construct a socio-economic profile of social security beneficiaries. The interviewees indicated that this study was referred to as a "baseline study". Given that it seeks to ascertain the situation regarding beneficiaries at a point during intervention, it is diagnostic in nature. However, there are also elements of an implementation evaluation since the study seeks to identify perceptions and experiences of service delivery.

Rating 5***STANDARD: Intended users and their information needs were identified in the TOR*****Comment and Analysis**

The intended users were not explicitly identified in the TOR. The interviewees indicated that there was intensive discussion around the types of questions to include in the study and this discussion would have taken into account the intended users and their information needs.

Rating 2***STANDARD: Key stakeholders were involved in the scoping of the TOR and determining the purpose of the evaluation*****Comment and Analysis**

The DDG from the Social Security branch of DSD requested the evaluation and worked together with DSD's Monitoring, Evaluation and Audit Directorate to develop the TOR. A reference group was set up consisting of experts in the field of social security. They gave input into the research design as well as questionnaire development. It was noted that DSD officials at provincial level were not involved in the scoping of the TOR and therefore some initial resistance was noted at province level when rolling out the fieldwork.

Rating 3

1.2. Evaluation was adequately resourced

STANDARD: The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of time allocated

Comment and Analysis

The fieldwork for the project was allocated a time frame of one year which was adequate, given the size of the study. The report notes that due to numerous problems in the fieldwork phase of the study, the fieldwork phase took much longer than anticipated. In addition, the final checking and cleaning of data also took much longer than anticipated. Despite this, it was indicated that the digital format of the questionnaire saved money since it reduced the time needed for data capturing.

Rating 3

STANDARD: The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of original budget

Comment and Analysis

There was adequate budget for the study. The report notes that the digital format of the questionnaire saved money since it reduced the need for data capturing and printing of questionnaires. Interviewees indicated that, since the sampling frame changed during the course of the study, a large portion of budget was left over - so in fact, the fieldwork was over-budgeted for. This was re-allocated to report writing and getting international experts on board to provide further input on data analysis and data use.

Rating 4

STANDARD: The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of staffing and skills sets

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation team was adequately skilled. Geospace International had particular IT expertise in rolling out the e-survey; HSRC conducted the data cleaning; and datadesk at University of Stellenbosch was sub-contracted to undertake data analysis and report writing.

Rating 5

STANDARD: Where appropriate, the evaluation planned to incorporate an element of capacity building of partners/staff responsible for the evaluand

Comment and Analysis

Besides training of fieldworkers formal capacity building was not planned and integrated into the evaluation process. However, the interviewees indicated that capacity building took place when knowledge and skills were imparted by the evaluation team to DSD officials throughout the process.

Rating 2

1.3. Alignment to Policy Context and Background Literature

STANDARD: There was evidence that a review of the relevant policy and programme environments had been conducted and used in the planning of the evaluation by the evaluators

Comment and Analysis

From the report there is no evidence that a thorough analysis of the relevant policy and programme environments was undertaken. However, each chapter of the report provides a brief descriptive overview of the grant including details of the amount, the application process and means test requirements (if applicable). It was also reported that the training of fieldworkers included details on the various grant types (definitions).

Rating 3

STANDARD: There was evidence of a review of appropriate literature having been conducted and used in the planning of the evaluation by the evaluators

Comment and Analysis

A brief literature review is contained in the last chapter of the report, however, it is unclear whether this review was used in the planning of the evaluation by the evaluators.

Rating 2

1.4. The evaluation methods planned were appropriate to the project

STANDARD: There was explicit reference to the intervention logic or the theory of change of the evaluand in the planning of the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

There is no explicit reference to the intervention logic or theory of change.

Rating 1

STANDARD: Key stakeholders were consulted on the design and methodology of the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

The service provider worked closely with DSD's M&E unit and Social Security Unit. In particular, there was close consultation when designing the survey instrument for the study. It was indicated by interviewees that whilst DSD officials at provincial level were informed of the study they were not consulted on the study design and this could have resulted in some difficulty with gaining support during fieldworker roll-out. Beneficiaries were not consulted or given the opportunity to contribute to the evaluation process.

Rating 4

STANDARD: The planned methodology was appropriate to the questions being asked

Comment and Analysis

It was noted by interviewees that the key purpose of the evaluation was to develop a socio-economic profile of social security beneficiaries. Therefore a survey followed by a descriptive analysis and report writing was the appropriate methodology required for this kind of study.

Rating 5

STANDARD: Planned sampling was appropriate and adequate given the focus and purpose of evaluation

Comment and Analysis

In order to construct an accurate profile of all social security beneficiaries, a large sample of more than 7000 beneficiaries was required. The service provider was responsible for developing the sampling frame and Professor Stoker was contracted to draw the sample of beneficiaries.

Rating 5

STANDARD: There was a planned process for using the findings of the evaluation prior to undertaking the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

There is no evidence of a planned process for using the findings. The interviewees indicated that a series of workshops were held to disseminate data after the study.

Rating 2

1.5. Inception phase

STANDARD: The inception phase was used to develop a common agreement on how the evaluation would be implemented

Comment and Analysis

During the inception phase timeframes for the study and key deliverables were agreed upon. This was captured in an overall project plan.

Rating 5

2. Implementation

2.1. Ethical Review and Considerations

STANDARD: *Where data was gathered in contexts where ethical sensitivity is high, appropriate clearance was obtained through an ethics review board; e.g. in evaluation involving minors, institutions where access usually requires ethical or bureaucratic clearance, and situations where assurances of confidentiality was offered to participants*

Comment and Analysis

The report contains no details of ethical considerations for the study. There was no ethical clearance for the study. Interviewees indicated that participants of the study were required to sign consent forms prior to interviews. They were given the right to refuse participation in the study and the right to withdrawal from the interview at any point. Fieldworkers were trained in these ethical standards.

Rating 3

2.2. Evaluator independence

STANDARD: *Where external, evaluation team was able to work freely without significant interference*

Comment and Analysis

The interviewees stated that the evaluation team was able to work freely. A study of this nature and scope required a significant amount of cooperation and consultation between the evaluation team and DSD who were involved at all levels of the study including instrument design, training fieldworkers, and quality control.

Rating 5

STANDARD: The evaluation team was impartial and there was no evidence of conflict of interest

Comment and Analysis

Interviewees reported that the evaluation team was impartial and there was no evidence of conflict of interest.

Rating 5

2.3. Key stakeholder involvement

STANDARD: Key stakeholders were consulted through a formalised mechanism or institutional arrangement during the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

A reference group was set up consisting of experts in the field of social security. They gave input into the research design as well as questionnaire development. Interviewees indicated that there was good consultation with key stakeholders throughout the study, including relevant government departments, NGOs and academic institutions.

Rating 5

STANDARD: Where appropriate, an element of capacity building of partners responsible for the evaluand was incorporated into the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

Capacity building was not formally integrated into the evaluation process, however, the interviewees indicated that, through their active involvement with the expert research team, capacity building of DSD officials took place throughout the study. For example, the service provider took DSD officials through the dataset and taught them how to utilise the data.

Rating 2

2.4. Methodology

STANDARD: The methods employed in the process of the evaluation were consistent with those planned

Comment and Analysis

A survey was undertaken for this study and this is consistent with those planned.

Rating 5

STANDARD: Data collection was not compromised by fieldwork-level problems or unplanned diversions from original intentions

Comment and Analysis

There were a number of fieldwork-level problems experienced: (1) the announcement of an amnesty period by DSD for beneficiaries receiving illegitimate grants resulted in some beneficiaries refusing to participate in the study; (2) a great number of beneficiaries could not be located at the pay point or at the supplied address from SOCPEN and these then had to be substituted; (3) certain field supervisors did not complete the quality control checks every evening resulting in the final checking and cleaning of data taking longer than anticipated. Other issues included: too much time spent on travel and accommodation; theft of laptops; technical problems with laptops. Although all of these problems were dealt with in field, the report states that they did hamper the progress of the study and quality of data. Whilst some interviewees indicated that these fieldwork problems did impact on the validity of the data others indicated that it did not.

Rating 2

STANDARD: Forms of data gathering were appropriate given the scope of evaluation

Comment and Analysis

A large scale survey was undertaken with fieldworkers using laptops to capture the data (soft copies of questionnaires). This was deemed appropriate given the large scale of the survey and the time and costs this saved. On the other hand, interviewees noted that the use of laptops posed a problem in rural areas as there was no internet connection, making it difficult to upload data onto a server.

Rating 4

STANDARD: The data analysis approach and methods were appropriate and sufficient given the purposes of the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

A descriptive, statistical data analysis approach was used for the study which is appropriate given the purpose of the evaluation. The data was disaggregated in terms of province only. The report states that this is "because grants are administered per province". However, analysis according to province only may be insufficient as the report states further that there are significant differences between rural and urban areas, informal and formal settlements etc and that DSD plans to do further analysis.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Key stakeholders were significantly engaged as part of the methodology

Comment and Analysis

Although not formally part of the methodology of the study, it was indicated that key stakeholders were engaged throughout the study. An interviewee indicated that some qualitative interviews were conducted with officials on provincial and district level and with NGOs however, this data was not used in analysis and reporting.

Rating 2

STANDARD: The methodology included engaging beneficiaries appropriately as a key source of data and information

Comment and Analysis

The beneficiaries of social assistance grants and their households were extensively engaged as the key source of data and information.

Rating 5

2.5. Project management

STANDARD: The evaluation was conducted without shifts to scheduled project milestones and timeframes

Comment and Analysis

The study was completed within the timeframes specified. The report notes that the fieldwork phase took longer than anticipated due to fieldwork-level problems.

Rating 3

3. Report

3.1. Report was well-structured and presentation was clear and complete in each of these areas

STANDARD: Executive summary captured key components of the report appropriately

Comment and Analysis

The report contains no executive summary although an interviewee indicated that an executive summary was produced at a later stage which is described as being short and more 'user-friendly'.

Rating 1

STANDARD: The context of the development intervention was explicit and presented as relevant to the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

The focus of this assessment is on volume 3 of the report which does not provide any introductory section containing background and context to social security in South Africa. A further scan of volume 1 of the report found that there is no presentation of the context. Some background and context is provided in the concluding chapter of the report (chapter 11: overview, summary and conclusion). This section is an extract from the Study on Incentive Structures for Social Assistance Grants in South Africa (Vorster, 2006).

Rating 2

STANDARD: There was a clear rationale for the evaluation questions**Comment and Analysis**

The motivation for the study is provided in brief in volume 1 of the report - that the DSD is unable to report on the profile of its beneficiaries and the survey will provide the DSD with baseline information of the status of its beneficiaries in a number of social and economic areas.

Rating 3

STANDARD: The scope or focus of the evaluation was apparent in the report**Comment and Analysis**

The scope and focus of the report is provided in Volume 1 of the report but is not introduced in volume 2 and volume 3.

Rating 3

STANDARD: A detailed methodology was outlined in the relevant section of a report (full report or 1/3/25) to the point that a reader could understand the data collection, analysis and interpretation**Comment and Analysis**

Details of the sample and methodology were provided in Volume 1 of the report. However, in terms of the structure of this section headings and sub-headings are not appropriately labelled; they are not in the correct sequence; and are insufficient. This results in the methodology section being difficult to read and understand.

Rating 2

STANDARD: Key findings were presented in a clear way; they were made distinct from uncertain or speculative findings; and unused data was not presented in the body of the report

Comment and Analysis

Findings are clearly presented with each chapter of the report presenting the socio-demographic profile of a particular social grant including a summary of findings at the end of each chapter. Where data was unreliable, this was clearly indicated. Uncertain or speculative findings were also identified as such.

Rating **5**

STANDARD: Conclusions and recommendations were clear and succinctly articulated

Comment and Analysis

The summary of survey findings is lengthy and followed by a brief conclusion and set of four recommendations specifying clearly how the data contained in the report should be further analysed, who should use it and how it should be used. However, new data is presented in this concluding chapter which includes an extract from the Study on Incentive Structures for Social Assistance Grants in South Africa (Vorster, 2006).

Rating **3**

STANDARD: Acknowledgement of limitations of all aspects of the methodology and findings were clearly and succinctly articulated

Comment and Analysis

Although there is no clear section on limitations of the methodology or findings, the limitations related to sampling and fieldwork are clearly articulated in the first chapter of the report.

Rating **3**

3.2. Writing and presentation

STANDARD: *Quality of writing and presentation was adequate for publication including: adequate layout and consistent formatting; complete sentences and no widespread grammatical or typographical errors; consistency of style and writing conventions (e.g. tense, perspective (first person, third person); levels of formality; references complete and consistent with cited references in reference list and vice versa; etc)*

Comment and Analysis

The quality of writing is good using simple descriptive language. The report is lengthy and was therefore split into three volumes. The focus of this assessment was on volume 3 which began with chapter 8. There is no introductory section to this volume making it difficult to contextualise the data being presented.

Rating 4

STANDARD: *Appropriate conventions were used in presentation of data (e.g. use of appropriate statistical language; reporting of p-values where appropriate; not reporting statistically insignificant findings as significant; clarifying disaggregation categories in constructing percentages; not using quantitative language in reporting qualitative data, etc.)*

Comment and Analysis

Simple statistical language is used to present the profile data throughout the report. Disaggregation of categories is explained clearly using percentages.

Rating 5

3.3. Presentation of findings

STANDARD: *The use of figures and tables was such that it supported communication and comprehension of results; and data reported in figures and tables was readily discernible and useful to a reader familiar with data presentation conventions*

Comment and Analysis

The survey findings are presented in tables and figures which are used extensively throughout the report. They are well-structured and easy to read and consistency in labelling and headings of tables assists with interpretation of data.

Rating 5

STANDARD: Data analysis appeared to have been well executed

Comment and Analysis

The technical details of data analysis are contained in Volume 1 of the report. Appendices related to data cleaning are contained in Volume 3.

Rating 4

STANDARD: Findings were supported by available evidence

Comment and Analysis

The survey covered 7000 grant beneficiaries which is a sufficiently representative sample. All information contained in the data set were reflected in the report.

Rating 5

STANDARD: The evidence gathered was sufficiently and appropriately analysed to support the argument**Comment and Analysis**

The evidence was sufficiently and appropriately analysed. The analysis is descriptive as it provides a detailed description of grant beneficiaries within the limitations of reactivity.

Rating 5

STANDARD: There was appropriate recognition of the possibility of alternative interpretations**Comment and Analysis**

Since this report is mostly descriptive, there is no further analysis of data and therefore reporting on the possibility of alternative interpretations is not applicable.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: The report appeared free of significant methodological and analytic flaws**Comment and Analysis**

Overall, the report appears free of significant methodological and analytic flaws.

Rating 5

3.4. Conclusions

STANDARD: Conclusions were derived from evidence

Comment and Analysis

The conclusions were derived from findings of the survey and also on analysis of uptake using SOCPEN data.

Rating 4

STANDARD: Conclusions took into account relevant empirical and/or analytic work from related research studies and evaluations

Comment and Analysis

The conclusions took into account the summary of findings of the survey. This is further complemented by new data which is presented on the uptake of grants based on an analysis of SOCPEN data and a comparison (limited) with population surveys to reflect levels of take-up.

Rating 4

STANDARD: Conclusions addressed the original evaluation purpose and questions

Comment and Analysis

Conclusions addressed the original questions required in order to construct a profile of social service beneficiaries.

Rating 4

STANDARD: Conclusions were drawn with explicit reference to the intervention logic or theory of change

Comment and Analysis

There is no reference to the intervention logic or theory of change.

Rating 1

3.5. Recommendations

STANDARD: Recommendations were made in consultation with appropriate sectoral partners or experts

Comment and Analysis

Interviewees reported that the task did not require that recommendations be developed, however, the report concludes with four recommendations specifying the need for further data analysis, who should use the data and how it should be used. In addition a working group of international and national experts was constituted in order to discuss how the data would be used.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Recommendations were shaped following input or review by relevant government officials and other relevant stakeholders

Comment and Analysis

It is unclear from the report whether recommendations were shaped following input from relevant officials and stakeholders. However, interviewees noted that workshops were held prior to finalisation of the report where there was significant input from a range of stakeholders.

Rating 4

STANDARD: Recommendations were relevant to the policy context**Comment and Analysis**

Whilst the recommendations do not refer directly to the policy context it is recommended that the report be unpacked in terms of policy implications for the social assistance system.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Recommendations were targeted to a specific audience sufficiently - were specific, feasible, affordable and acceptable**Comment and Analysis**

The recommendations for the study were limited to use of the data and dissemination. They are targeted specifically to DSD.

Rating 3

3.6. Relevant limitations of the evaluation have been noted**STANDARD: Relevant limitations of the evaluation were noted****Comment and Analysis**

Although there is no clear section on limitations in the report, the limitations related in particular to the sampling has been identified.

Rating 3

3.7 Protection of participants and risk considerations

STANDARD: The full report documented procedures intended to ensure confidentiality and to secure informed consent where this was needed (in some cases this is not needed - e.g. evaluation synthesis - in which case N/A should be recorded)

Comment and Analysis

The full report does not document procedures used to ensure confidentiality and informed consent. This is despite the fact that ethical procedures were followed during fieldwork.

Rating 1

STANDARD: There were no risks to participants in disseminating the original report on a public website

Comment and Analysis

There is no risk to the grant beneficiaries in the study as the information reported on is not attributed to any individuals.

Rating 5

STANDARD: There were no unfair risks to institutions in disseminating the original report on a public website

Comment and Analysis

There is no apparent risk to institutions in disseminating the report to the public.

Rating 5

4. Follow-up, use and learning

4.1. Presentation to stakeholders

STANDARD: Results were presented to all relevant stakeholders

Comment and Analysis

A series of workshops were held to present the findings to relevant stakeholders including various state departments and civil society organisations. It is unclear whether the findings were disseminated to the beneficiaries themselves.

Rating 4

4.2. Resource utilisation

STANDARD: The evaluation was completed within the planned timeframes

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation was completed within the planned timeframe.

Rating 5

STANDARD: The evaluation was completed within the agreed budget

Comment and Analysis

Interviewees indicated that, due to the fact that the sampling frame for the study was adjusted, much less budget was required than anticipated to reach the sample. The result was that a lot of money was left over in the budget and the service provider then agreed to re-allocate this amount to data analysis and report writing.

Rating 3

4.3. Transparency

STANDARD: The report was publicly available (website or otherwise published document), except where there were legitimate security concerns

Comment and Analysis

Volume 3 of the report is publicly available on DSD website.

Rating 5

4.4. Lessons learnt

STANDARD: After completion of the evaluation, a reflective process was undertaken by staff responsible for the evaluand to reflect on what could be done to strengthen future evaluations

Comment and Analysis

A reflective process was undertaken internally by the service provider in order to reflect on the evaluation process. It is unclear whether a similar process occurred within DSD.

Rating 1

4.5. Symbolic and conceptual value

STANDARD: The evaluation study was seen by interviewed stakeholders as having added significant symbolic value to the policy or programme (eg raised its profile)

Comment and Analysis

The study was cited by interviewees as the first in depth profiling of grant beneficiaries and primary caregivers. This kind of data was not available before, particularly since data on beneficiaries contained on the SOCPEN database is viewed as unreliable and only provides limited data on beneficiaries.

Rating 4

STANDARD: The evaluation study was of conceptual value in understanding what has happened and possibly in shaping policy and practice

Comment and Analysis

Interviewees indicate that this study is the only source of detailed information on grant beneficiaries (of all grants) to date and is used extensively by stakeholders from both government and civil society sectors to inform policy, programme and advocacy interventions.

Rating 4

4.6. Utilisation of findings and recommendations

STANDARD: There was clear evidence of instrumental use - that the recommendations of the evaluation were implemented to a significant extent

Comment and Analysis

Based on anecdotal evidence from interviewees it appears that the recommendations have been implemented, to some degree. The data is reportedly being utilised by various directorates in the DSD to inform future policies and programming; the report has been made available to the research community for on-going further analysis; and the profile data has been analysed to produce further reports, for example on incentive structures.

Rating 4

STANDARD: There was clear evidence that the evaluation has had a positive influence on the evaluand, its stakeholders and beneficiaries over the medium to long term

Comment and Analysis

It was noted by the DSD interviewee that this study uncovered a lot of problems related to DSD grant systems such as the issue of migration of beneficiaries and corruption. As a result SASSA has begun to improve the administration of their system such as piloting fingerprinting and re-registration of grant beneficiaries. There is reportedly also a more "latent impact" of this study, particularly for the beneficiaries. As data on grant beneficiaries became available, civil society and government was able to use it for various purposes. For example TAC used it in their advocacy around the chronic disease grant; it has been used by advocates of the Basic Income Grant.

Rating 4

References

Vorster, J; de Waal, L; de Koker, C. (2006) "A profile of social security beneficiaries in South Africa - Volume 3", Datadesk: Department of Sociology & Social Anthropology,

Vorster, J; de Waal, L; de Koker, C. (2006) "A profile of social security beneficiaries in South Africa - Volume 1", Datadesk: Department of Sociology & Social Anthropology -

List of Interviewees

Professor Vorster, Consultant: Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Stellenbosch, Telephonic interview, 21/1/2013.

Thabane Buthelezi, M&E Officer: Department of Social Development, M&E Unit, Telephonic interview, 21/1/2013.

Ettiene de Fortier, Consultant: Geospace International, Telephonic interview, 24/1/2013.